Interoperable Infrastructures for Digital Research: A proposed pathway for enabling transformation

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The Challenge

Researchers want:

- Scalable access to large quantities of digital content
- To work with all types of content – text, image, audio, video
- To work the way they want to, use any workflow, address any sort of problem
- To work across collections irrespective of content owner or licence terms.

Researchers get:

- Restrictive, proscriptive and incompatible infrastructures
- Assets distributed unevenly across organisations and systems.

The digital resources I need to do my research come from many places and have unpredictable formats, data structures, and terms of use. To collect and process them would require resources that are simply unavailable to me.

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Our Proposed Pathway

- Use off-the-shelf technologies and services
- Bring computational capacity to data
- Provide researchers with something they know and use – a file system and desktop
- Offer research libraries a cost-effective model that scales with use.

Five Principles

- **Keep it simple**
- **Lower the bar**
- **Bring your own tools**
- **Be creative**
- **Enable users to start small and grow big.**

http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/digital-scholarship/

Our experience

Microsoft Azure for Research Awards
Mechanical Curator

British Library Labs
The Victorian Meme Machine

UCL Computer Science
The British Library Big Data experiment

Precedents

- HathiTrust Research Centre
- European Bioinformatics Institute Embassy Cloud

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